

Message Text

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ACTION ARA-10

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INFO ALL CONSULATES IN MEXICO VIA POUCH

C O N F I D E N T I A L MEXICO 2777

E. O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PINT, PFOR, SHUM, MX

SUBJECT: MONTHLY POLITICAL HIGHLIGHTS-FEBRUARY

SUMMARY: THERE WERE INDICATORS (SEE PARA 1-8) THIS MONTH OF CONTINUING UNRESOLVED DIFFERENCES WITHIN THE PRI-GOM ESTABLISHMENT, AND THAT LOPEZ PORTILLO'S POSITION REMAINS THAT OF AN IMPOTENT, THOUGH UNQUESTIONED, CROWN PRINCE. THE MEXICAN SYSTEM, NEVERTHELESS, MAY WELL BE PROCEEDING IN ITS UNIQUE

FASHION TO RESOLVE DIFFERENCES AND WE DO NOT SEE ANY SIGNS OF DANGEROUS STRESSES. ON OUR FEBRUARY CALENDAR, THE BAD NEWS WAS GOM RECOGNITION OF ANGOLA, GENERALLY BAD PRESS ON THE SECRETARY'S LA TRIP, AND IMPLEMENTATION OF UNILATERAL DECLARATION OF A 200-MILE ZONE EFFECTIVE JUNE 4. GOOD NEWS: POSTPONEMENT (AT LEAST, POSSIBLY DEFINITIVE CANCELLATION) OF FIDEL CASTRO'S VISIT TO MEXICO; CANCEL-LATION OF A SCHEDULED WFTU/CUBAN SUPPORTED HEMISPHERIC CONFERENCE OF AGRARIAN WORKERS.

1. THE CAMPAIGN(REF MEXICO 1418; MEXICO 1964): STILL ON CAMPAIGN, STILL SHADOW-BOXING IN THE ABSENCE OF ANY OPPOSITION, CANDIDATE(OTHER THAN WRITE-IN GESTURE BY COMMUNISTS), PRI PRESIDENTIAL CHOICE JOSE LOPEZ PORTILLO(JLP) MAINTAINED DURING
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FEBRUARY A CAUTIOUS (IF COPIOUS) FLOW OF GENERALITIES. CONFIDENTIAL

COMMENTS BY KNOWLEDGEABLE MEXICAN POLITICOS TO EMBOFFS MADE IT APPARENT THAT JLP IS FAR FROM CONTROLLING THE PARTY ORGANIZATION OR, IN SIGNIFICANT RESPECTS, HIS OWN CAMPAIGN THUS FAR. SUPPORTING THIS VIEW WAS THE FACT THAT SO MANY STALWARTS OF THE ECHEVERRIA ADMINISTRATION WERE NAMED ON FEBRUARY 14 AS PRI CANDIDATES FOR DEPUTY OR SENATE SEATS(THOUGH A JLP CONFIDANT EXPLAINED THIS AS A DELIBERATE MEANS OF AVOIDING THE NECESSITY TO FIND REAL JOBS--RATHER THAN LEGISLATIVE SINECURES--FOR PEOPLE HE DOES NOT LIKE.) WE ASSUME THAT JLP'S STRATEGY, AT THIS TIME, IS TO MAKE NO DAMAGING WAVES IN THE PRI POND, BIDDING HIS TIME UNTIL IN DUE COURSE POWER LIES IRREVOCABLY IN HIS HANDS. IN THE MEANTIME, HE IS PRESUMABLY GAINING NEW AND CURRENT INSIGHT INTO MEXICAN PROBLEMS WHICH WILL SERVE HIM WELL WHEN HIS HOUR STRIKES.

2. VISITS, ON AND OFF(REF MEXICO 1489; MEXICO 2397):

ISRAELI FONMIN ALLON'S VISIT TO MEXICO MATERIALIZED ON FEBRUARY 29. TONE OF THE VISIT(WHICH WILL BE REPORTED IN DETAIL) SEEMED SET BY STATEMENTS OF ALLON AND FONSEC GARCIA ROBLES AGREEING, IN EFFECT, TO DISAGREE ON SOME SUBJECTS. LATEST INFORMATION ON YUGOSLAVIA'S TITO INDICATED THAT HIS PROPOSED VISIT TO MEXICO, POSTPONED BECAUSE OF ILLNESS, IS ONCE MORE SCHEDULED. CUBA'S CASTRO, ON THE OTHER HAND, WILL NOT VISIT MEXICO IN MARCH (AS HAD BEEN WIDELY RUMORED), THOUGH PUBLIC STATEMENTS BY CUBAN AMBASSADOR LOPEZ MUINO AND PRESIDENT ECHEVERRIA DID NOT INDICATE A DEFINITIVE CANCELLATION OF A CASTRO VISIT AT SOME TIME. (COMMENT: ECHEVERRIA, WE UNDERSTAND, IS RELIEVED THAT CASTRO IS NOT COMING.)

3. REACTION TO SECRETARY'S LA TRIP (REF MEXICO 2374; MEXICO 2417):

MEXICAN OFFICIALS HAVE CAREFULLY REFRAINED FROM DIRECT PUBLIC COMMENTS

ON SECRETARY KISSINGER'S LA VISITS. PRESIDENTIAL CANDIDATE LOPEZ PORTILLO, HOWEVER, WAS OBVIOUSLY REFERRING TO THE NEW U.S.-BRAZIL CONSULTATIVE AGREEMENT WHEN HE SAID IN A BY-LINED INTERVIEW THAT "MEXICO IS NOT A BRAZIL NOR DOES IT WANT TO BE." (SEE REFTELS.) THE CITED AGREEMENT, CLEARLY STUNG MANY MEXICANS BECAUSE THEY ASSUME A "SPECIAL RELATIONSHIP" BETWEEN THE U.S. AND MEXICO AND BECAUSE OF REAL

IF TACIT RIVALRY(AT LEAST FROM THE MEXICAN POINT OF VIEW) WITH BRAZIL OVER LATIN AMERICAN LEADERSHIP. MEDIA COVERAGE AND COMMENTARY ON THE SECRETARY'S TRIP WAS, BY AND LARGE CIRITICAL, RANGING FROM
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COMMENTS THAT THE TRIP WAS POINTLESS AND "INADVISABLE" TO CHARGES THAT IT WAS INTENDED TO SPLIT LATIN AMERICAN SOLIDARITY.

4. REACTION TO ANGOLA: MEXICO JOINED (ON FEBRUARY 20) THOSE COUNTRIES FLOCKING TO ESTABLISH DIPLOMATIC RELATIONS WITH THE MPLA REGIME

OPINION WITHIN THE GOM (AND AMONG POLITICAL PUNDITS) CLEARLY FAVORED SUCH ACTION(IF FOR NO OTHER REASON THAN THE GOM'S INTENSE ANTIPATHY

FOR SOUTH AFRICA, THOUGH OTHER CONSIDERATIONS WERE NO DOUBT ALSO INVOLVED). PRIVATELY, HOWEVER, WE BELIEVE THAT ECHEVERRIA IS WORRIED OVER THE EXTENT OF THE CUBAN INVOLVEMENT AND THE IMPLICATIONS CUBAN INTERVENTION HOLD FOR MEXICO AND THE REST OF LATIN AMERICA.

5. ELECTRICAL WORKERS (REF MEXICO 2523): CONFLICT CONTINUES BETWEEN LEADERS OF THE NATIONAL UNION OF ELECTRIC POWER(SUTERM) AND A DISSIDENT GROUP LED BY RAFAEL GALVAN. A DEMONSTRATION BY THE GALVAN GROUP SCHEDULED FOR FEBRUARY 28 WAS CANCELLED, AT THE LAST MOMENT, WHEN THE GOM (BEHIND THE SCENES) WEIGHED IN WITH A CALL FOR A MASS PRI RALLY AT THE SAME TIME AND NEAR THE SAME PLACE. THE GOM WAS SURPRISED AND CHAGRINED OVER A GALVAN MARCH LAST NOVEMBER, NOT ONLY BECAUSE OF THE NUMBER OF DEMONSTRATORS BUT ALSO BECAUSE OF THE CLEARLY ANTI-GOVERNMENT, ANTI-ESTABLISHMENT POLITICAL OVERTONES OF THE GALVAN MOVEMENT. THE LATTER HAS RESCHEDULED ITS DEMONSTRATION FOR MARCH 20; WE EXPECT THE GOVERNMENT TO FIND A WAY, ONCE MORE, TO BLOCK THE RALLY.

6. WFTU AGRARIAN WORKERS CONFERENCE CANCELLED(REF MEXICO 2092): THE CONFERENCE, STRONGLY PRESSED BY THE WFTU AND THE CUBANS (SEE REFTTEL) BUT OPPOSED BY FIDEL VELAZQUEZ AND THE CTM, WAS CANCELLED AT MONTH'S END(TO THE GREAT CHAGRIN OF THE CUBANS) PRETEXT FOR CANCELLATION WAS THE URGENT NEED OF THE MEXICAN ORGANIZER TO DEVOTE FULL TIME TO HIS RACE AS CANDIDATE FOR SENATOR.

7. EXCLUSIVE ECONOMIC ZONE: BY OFFICIAL PUBLICATION ON FEBRUARY 6, MEXICO UNILATERALLY ESTABLISHED AN EXCLUSIVE 200-MILE ECONOMIC ZONE OFF MEXICAN COASTS, TO TAKE EFFECT ON JUNE 4. (WE HAD EARLIER REPORTED JUNE 5; MEXICAN CALCULATION DIFFERS.) THOUGH EXPECTED, THE GOM ACTION POSES URGENT PROBLEMS OF BILATERAL CONSULTATION--NEGOTIATION, SINCE GOM OFFICIALS HAVE MADE CLEAR THAT THERE WILL BE NO POSTPONEMENT.

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8. TROUBLE IN MONTERREY(REF MONTERREY 2350, MONTERREY 2362): POLICE ACTION AGAINST URBAN SQUATTERS ON FEBRUARY 18 IN MONTERREY LEFT A TOLL

OF SIX DEAD AND FIVE WOUNDED AND LED TO A PROTEST DEMONSTRATION (ESTI

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MATED AT 15,000) ON FEBRUARY 24. OUR CONSULATE IN MONTERREY IS FOLLOWING THIS SITUATION CLOSELY. OBSERVERS IN MEXICO CITY WERE REMINDED OF THE RECENT SIMILAR BLOODY INCIDENT (INVOLVING LAND INVASIONS) IN SONORA WHICH LED TO THE DOWNFALL OF GOVERNOR BIEBRICH. NUEVO LEON OGVERNOR ZORRILLA, LIKE BIEBRICH, IS CLOSELY IDENTIFIED WITH GOVERNACION SECRETARY MOYA PALENCIA, AND SOME HAVE SPECULATED THAT THE TWO INCIDENTS MARK A VIOLENT STRUGGLE WITHING THE ESABLISHMENT BETWEEN MOYA'S ENEMIES AND HIS SUPPORTERS.
CALDERHEAD

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